

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 711

S E C R E T BANGKOK 19778

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MMOL, MILI, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: U.S. RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 169617

1. KOSON SINTHAWANON, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD THE DCM JULY 13 THAT FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHAIR FELT STRONGLY THAT HE AND THE AMBASSADOR SHOULD SIGN A GENERAL AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING ON JULY 16 REGARDING THE CLOSURE OF U.S. FACILITIES AND RELATED MATTERS. PHICHAIR WAS CONCERNED THAT THE PRESS, STUDENTS AND PERHAPS OTHER GROUPS MIGHT CREATE PROBLEMS ON JULY 20 IF A FORMAL AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN CONCLUDED BY THAT TIME. KOSON SAID THAT TECHNICAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS COULD CONTINUE AND DETAILED AGREEMENTS COULD BE WORK OUT SUBSEQUENTLY.

2. DRAWING ON GUIDANCE OBTAINED IN REFTEL THE DCM SAID THAT WE HAD SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FORMAL CONCLUSION OF A NEW GENERAL AGREEMENT AND THAT, IN ANY EVENT, SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD REQUIRE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND COMPLETION OF CIRCULAR 175 PROCEDURES WHICH COULD NOT BE CONCLUDED BEFORE JULY 20. STRESSING AGAIN THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SOME FORMAL ACTION BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS BEFORE THE JULY 20 DEADLINE, KOSON SUGGESTED AN
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EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES (THE DCM MADE THE SAME RESPONSE

AS FOR A SIGNED AGREEMENT). THEY FINALLY AGREED THAT A JOINT PRESS STATEMENT MIGHT BE ISSUED FOLLOWING A MEETING BETWEEN THE AMBASSADOR AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

3. GIVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF STUDENT AGITATION ON JULY 20 AND THE STRONG FEELINGS ON THIS MATTER EXPRESSED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD, ON BALANCE, BE IN OUR INTERESTS TO MEET THE THAI REQUEST FOR A JOINT STATEMENT. TO STONEWALL THEM FURTHER, HAVING REJECTED THEIR STRONG REQUEST FOR A FORMAL SIGNED AGREEMENT OR AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES, WOULD CREATE PROBLEMS IN OUR FUTURE DEALINGS WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON OUR RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND OTHER MATTERS. SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD ALSO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF FORMALLY ASSOCIATING THE RTG WITH OUR RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES. AS A FIRST CUT AT A PROPOSED JOINT STATEMENT TO BE ISSUED ON FRIDAY, JULY 16, IN BANGKOK WE SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING. WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS BY IMMEDIATE TELEGRAM. IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO GET THIS TO MFA ON WEDNESDAY BANGKOK TIME TO FORESTALL THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT DRAFT SOMETHING LESS FAVORABLE.

BEGIN TEXT.

4. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BHICHAIRATTAKUL AND AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. WHITEHOUSE MET ON JULY 16, 1976, TO REVIEW THE STATUS OF UNITED STATES MILITARY WITHDRAWALS FROM THAILAND. THE AMBASSADOR NOTIFIED THE MINISTER THAT THE NUMBER OF UNITED STATES MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE JOINT UNITED STATES MILITARY ADVISORY GROUP IS NOW BELOW THE CEILING OF 270 ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND. THE DEEPWATER PORT AT SATTAPHI WAS TURNED ENTIRELY OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND ON JULY 15, AND THE MACHTAI HEADQUARTERS WILL BE CLOSED ON JULY 20, COMPLETING THE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE.

5. THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE AMBASSADOR ALSO REVIEWED THE PROGRESS OF TECHNICAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REGARDING THE TURNOVER OF CERTAIN ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND. THEY NOTED THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE WELL UNDERWAY REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS

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UNDER WHICH THE EQUIPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (ICS) WOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND ON A GRANT OR LOAN BASIS, WITH THAT GOVERNMENT ASSUMING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING THE ICS SITES AND CONCLUDING SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINING THE EQUIPMENT.

6. REGARDING THE 14,480 SHORT TONS OF AMMUNITION COMPRISING

THE AMMUNITION IN THAILAND (AIT), THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT REAL PROGRESS AND BEEN MADE ON TECHNICAL LEVEL TALKS ON AN AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH THIS AMMUNITION WOULD BE RETAINED IN THAILAND UNDER U.S. OWNERSHIP SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND TO PURCHASE IT WITHIN THREE YEARS AND THE CONCLUSION OF SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE STOCKS.

7. THEY NOTED ALSO THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE WELL ADVANCED ON ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WILL TRAIN THAI TECHNICIANS TO OPERATE THE SEISMIC RESEARCH STATION AT CHIANG MAI. TECHNICAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS HAVE ALSO COVERED ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNITED STATES PLANES IN TRANSIT TO UTILIZE THE ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE AT TAKHLI FOR REFUELING AND EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TURNOVER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND OF A NUMBER OF ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT FORMERLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE RADIO RESEARCH FACILITY AT RAMASUN.

8. THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE AMBASSADOR WERE PLEASED TO NOTE THAT TALKS ON THESE MATTERS WERE PROCEEDING RAPIDLY AND IN A COOPERATIVE SPIRIT AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL. FINAL AGREEMENT ON ALL THE MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION IS EXPECTED WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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WHITEHOUSE

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